

## Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 AID-01 SS-07 NSC-06 RSC-01 /025 W

----- 047375

R 030200Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1535

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP, VS

SUBJECT: VISIT TO RVN BY CONGRESSMAN LEO J. RYAN

REF: STATE 276828

1. CONGRESSMAN LEO J. RYAN, MEMBER OF HFAC, VISITED RVN DEC 26-31. DEC 28-31 HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBER GEORGE INGRAM. REFTTEL INDICATED CONGRESSMAN'S DESIRE TO HAVE MISSION BRIEFINGS ON MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID, AND TO MEET WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION LEADERS. IN HIS DISCUSSIONS IN SAIGON WITH BOTH AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE CONGRESSMAN RYAN MADE CLEAR THAT AID TO VIETNAM WOULD RECEIVE CLOSE SCRUTINY IN FORTHCOMING CONGRESS, AND THAT HE DESIRED TO KNOW SITUATION AT FIRST HAND IN PREPARATION FOR THIS CONSIDERATION. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT CONGRESSIONAL OPINION WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY ISSUES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, DEGREE OF FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION AND DISSENT ALLOWED, AND CORRUPTION.

2. DURING HIS VISIT CONGRESSMAN RYAN RECEIVED MISSION BRIEFINGS ON ABOVE MATTERS AND DISCUSSED THEM WITH SENIOR MISSION OFFICIALS. PRINCIPAL VIETNAMESE HE MET WERE DEPUTY PM PHAN QUANG DAN, UPPER HOUSE CHAIRMAN TRAN VAN LAM, LOWER HOUSE CHAIRMAN NGUYEN BA CAN, MR II COMMANDER LTG PHAM VAN PHU, MR IV COMMANDER NGUYEN KHOA NAM, CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE BG NGUYEN KHAC BINH, AND CVT PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU. OPPOSITION LEADERS MET WERE DEPUTY TRAN VAN TUYEN, LEADER OF PEOPLE'S SOCIETY BLOC IN LOWER HOUSE; PROFESSOR NGUYEN NGOC HUY, SEC GEN OF PROGRESSIVE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT; AND FATHER TRAN HUU THANH, LEADER OF

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PEOPLE'S ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT. CONGRESSMAN RYAN ALSO MET

REPORTERS GEORGE MCARTHUR OF LOS ANGELES TIMES AND PHILLIP MCCOMBS OF WASHINGTON POST.

3. DURING HIS VISIT CONGRESSMAN SAW A CVT SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER, VISITED NATIONAL INTERROGATION CENTER, AND TOURED TAN HIEP PRISON IN BIEN HOA (SUBJECT OF MANY "POLITICAL PRISONER" ALLEGATIONS).

HE TRAVELED TO MR IV AND MR II AND SAW FISH FARMS, AN AGRICULTURAL BANK, AND SEVERAL RESETTLEMENT SITES. HE ALSO RECEIVED MILITARY BRIEFINGS FROM BINH DINH PROVINCE CHIEF AND COMMANDING GENERAL OF 22ND DIVISION, BG PHAN DINH NIEM.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES VISIT WAS VERY USEFUL IN PROVIDING CONGRESSMAN RYAN A FIRST-HAND BASIS FOR JUDGEMENT CONCERNING THE ISSUES OUTLINED IN PARA 1, AND IN PARTICULAR GAVE HIM A MORE ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE "POLITICAL PRISONER" AND POLITICAL FREEDOM QUESTIONS. EMBASSY ALSO FEELS HE WAS FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH ABILITIES AND PROGRESS OF GVN, AND WITH POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SVN. FINALLY, IT WAS CLEAR

FROM DAO BRIEFINGS AND REMARKS OF VIETNAMESE MILITARY LEADERS IN FIELD THAT A HIGHER LEVEL OF FIGHTING COULD LEAD TO CRITICAL SHORTAGES OF KEY MILITARY SUPPLIES BY END OF FISCAL YEAR, DESPITE ENERGETIC GVN EFFORTS TO ECONOMIZE.

5. WE BELIEVE CONGRESSMAN RYAN LEFT VIETNAM CONVINCED THAT THE REALITIES OF THE CURRENT SITUATION HERE AS HE SAW THEM ARE VERY MUCH AT VARIANCE WITH THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED "CONVENTIONAL WISDOM" SO CAREFULLY CULTIVATED BY THE PROPAGANDA OF THE "ANTI-WAR PROTEST MOVEMENTS" SUCH AS THE RECENT "PASTORAL LETTER" INITIATED BY CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED. HIS REPORT TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SHOULD REFLECT THAT CONVICTION UNLESS HE IS DISSUADED AFTER HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON. WE BELIEVE, AS AN OBVIOUSLY HONEST MAN, HE WILL NOT LET THIS HAPPEN.  
MARTIN

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**TAGS:** OREP, VS, (RYAN, LEO J)  
**To:** STATE  
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